

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ERDA-07 AID-05
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3985

INFO ALL CONSULATES IN CANADA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 OTTAWA 5811

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, ENRG, ETRD, SENV, CA

SUBJECT: ENERGY: NEB RECOMMENDATION ON NORTHERN GAS PIPE-
LINE

PASS WHITE HOUSE/SCHLESINGER AND GOLDMAN, FEA, FPC

1. SUMMARY. 5 PM JULY 4 NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD (NEB)
ANNOUNCED ITS RECOMMENDATION ON NORTHERN GAS PIPELINE
APPLICATIONS. BOARD IS PREPARED TO CERTIFY FOOTHILLS-
YUKON (ALCAN) ROUTE SUBJECT TO FOLLOWING CONDITIONS: 1)
CONSORTIUM'S CORPORATE STRUCTURE BE MODIFIED TO MAKE IT
MORE COMPATIBLE WITH INTER-PROVINCIAL AND INTERNATIONAL
PIPELINE SYSTEM; 2) FEASIBILITY STUDIES BE CONDUCTED FOR
A LINK CONNECTING MACKENZIE DELTA GAS WITH ALCAN LINE;
3) CAPACITY NEEDED TO SHIP CANADIAN GAS IN 48-INCH LINE
TO CANADIAN MARKETS BE ASSURED BY AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOC
AND CONSORTIUM, AND 4) SUM OF UP TO 200 MILLION DOLLARS
BE PAID BY CONSORTIUM TO CANADIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD
BE USED TO COVER INDIRECT COSTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT
OF PIPELINE. NEB DENIED ARCTIC GAS APPLICATION LARGELY
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ON GROUNDS THAT ITS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON NORTHERN
YUKON AND MACKENZIE DELTA WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE. ALL-
CANADIAN ("MAPLE LEAF") LINE PROPOSED BY FOOTHILLS WAS
REJECTED BECAUSE IT COULD NOT BE FINANCED AND PIPELINE
SHOULD NOT BE BUILT IN MACKENZIE VALLEY AT THIS TIME.
END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS OUTLINE THE BOARD'S MORE SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

3. FINDINGS:

A. PIPELINE TO TRANSPORT MACKENZIE DELTA GAS TO CANADIAN MARKETS WILL BE NEEDED DURING FIRST HALF OF 1980'S.

BOARD BASED FINDING ON FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS:

-- CANADA WILL NEED ADDITIONAL GAS BEYOND THAT FORECAST TO BE AVAILABLE FROM CONVENTIONAL AREAS IN ORDER TO MEET "MOST LIKELY" FORECAST OF CANADIAN DEMAND PLUS EXISTING EXPORT COMMITMENTS AS EARLY AS 1981 OR AS LATE AS 1985, DEPENDING ON GOVERNMENT POLICY CHOICES.

-- ELIMINATION OR PHASE-DOWN OF EXISTING AUTHORIZED EXPORTS OF GAS COULD EXTEND SUPPLY TO MEET CANADIAN REQUIREMENTS UNTIL 1990, BUT BOARD RECOMMENDS AGAINST SUCH ACTION.

-- BOARD ENDORSES VIGOROUS ENERGY CONSERVATION POLICY AND IN ITS "MOST LIKELY" FORECAST OF CANADIAN GAS DEMAND HAS ATTEMPTED REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF DEMAND REDUCTION RESULTING FROM CONSERVATION; BUT BOARD REJECTS PROPOSAL OF SEVERAL PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS THAT A PIPELINE FROM THE MACKENZIE DELTA SHOULD BE DENIED IN ORDER TO REINFORCE DEMAND LIMITATION.

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-- OF PRESENT 5.3 TCF RESERVES ESTABLISHED IN DELTA, 5.1 TCF ARE ECONOMIC, CAN BE CONNECTED TO GAS-PROCESSING PLANTS, AND WOULD SUPPORT 700 TO 800 MMCF PER DAY DELIVERABILITY.

-- OF SEVERAL NEW LARGE SOURCES OF ENERGY AVAILABLE TO CANADA IN NEAR FUTURE, DELTA GAS HAS LOWEST COST IN CURRENT DOLLAR TERMS.

B. NEB BELIEVES THAT FROM AN ENGINEERING POINT OF VIEW ANY OF PROPOSED PROJECTS COULD BE BUILT TO ITS SATISFACTION, WITH CERTAIN MODIFICATIONS TO FINAL DESIGN.

C. BOARD IS CONCERNED ABOUT SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE ROUTE.

D. BOARD HAS ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS RELATED TO A PIPELINE ROUTE FROM ALASKA-YUKON BORDER TO TUNUNUK JUNCTION. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ALCAN PROJECT COULD BE HELD TO TOLERABLE LEVELS BY MITIGATIVE MEASURES.

E. A CRUCIAL QUESTION IN REGARD TO ANY LAND BRIDGE PROPOSAL FOR TRANSMISSION OF ALASKAN GAS THROUGH CANADA IS WHETHER PROJECT HAS POTENTIAL FOR BRINGING DELTA GAS TO CANADIAN MARKETS. ALCAN PROJECT HAS SUCH POTENTIAL IN FORM OF DEMPSTER LINK.

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F. PRECISE TIMING OF NEED FOR DEMPSTER LINK IS NOT KNOWN BUT PLANNING FOR ALCAN PROJECT SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH SUCH A LINK.

G. IN ORDER TO FACILITATE DEMPSTER LINK, BOARD WOULD REQUIRE THAT ALCAN LINE BE REROUTED VIA DAWSON. DIVERSION WOULD REDUCE COST OF DELTA GAS BY 12 CENTS PER MCF WHILE INCREASING COST OF TRANSMISSION OF ALASKAN GAS BY 6 CENTS PER MCF OR LESS.

H. BOARD WOULD ACCEPT PRELIMINARY ARCTIC GAS FINANCING PLAN WITH TWO EXCEPTIONS:

-- ARCTIC GAS WOULD HAVE TO PROVIDE FOR MAJORITY CANADIAN CONTROL OF EQUITY OF ITS COMPANY; AND

-- BOARD REJECTS ARCTIC GAS RECOMMENDATION THAT CANADIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE FINANCIAL BACKSTOPPING FOR PROJECT.

I. ALTHOUGH ALCAN CONSORTIUM DID NOT REQUEST BACKSTOPPING

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BY GOC, BOARD IS CONCERNED ABOUT FINANCING AND OWNERSHIP OF PROJECT. BOARD BELIEVES CREDIT CAPABILITY OF ALBERTA GAS TRUNK LINE AND WEST COAST TRANSMISSION WOULD POSSIBLY BE IMPAIRED BY THEIR UNEQUIVOCAL UNDERTAKINGS TO COMPLETE PROJECT IRRESPECTIVE OF COST OVERRUNS. BOARD BELIEVES SOME RESTRUCTURING OF CORPORATE SET-UP WOULD BE NECESSARY.

J. IN ORDER TO ASSURE ALCAN PROJECT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH BROADER PURPOSES OF INTEGRATED INTERPROVINCIAL PIPELINE, WITH UNIFORM DESIGN AND TARIFFS, BUT WITH DECENTRALIZATION OF CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION, BOARD FAVORS HAVING PIPELINE SEGMENTS SOUTH OF 60TH PARALLEL OWNED BY FEDERALLY INCORPORATED SUBSIDIARIES OF ALCAN, WITH 51 PERCENT OWNERSHIP, AND REMAINDER (49 PERCENT) VESTED IN PIPELINE COMPANY OPERATING IN AREA CONCERNED. BOARD BELIEVES INNOVATIVE TARIFFS WOULD BE NEEDED TO PROVIDE FOR MAXIMUM PRIVATE SECTOR FINANCING OF NORTHERN PIPELINE. IT THEREFORE ENDORSES "ALL EVENTS" TARIFF PRINCIPLE AND NEED FOR SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENTS WITH SHIPPERS COVERING PERIOD BEFORE TARIFF PROPERLY COMES INTO EFFECT.

K. USING UNIT COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION FILED BY APPLICANTS AND RECOGNIZING LIMITS ON COMPARABILITY, BOARD FINDS:

-- FOR TRANSPORTATION OF ALASKAN GAS FROM PRUDHOE BAY TO 49TH PARALLEL, DIFFERENCES IN UNIT COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION VIA ARCTIC GAS AND ALCAN PROJECTS ARE RELATIVELY SMALL;
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COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION OF DELTA GAS TO EMPRESS THAN ALCAN PROJECT.

-- REROUTING ALCAN PROJECT VIA DAWSON WOULD INCREASE UNIT
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COST OF TRANSPORTING ALASKAN GAS TO LOWER 48 STATES SLIGHTLY WHILE PROVIDING SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER TRANSPORTATION COSTS TO CANADIAN SHIPPERS OF DELTA GAS;

-- WITH 1.2 BCF PER DAY THROUGH-PUT FROM DELTA AND 2 BCF PER DAY THROUGH-PUT FROM ALASKA, TRANSMISSION COST OF DELTA GAS TO EMPRESS APPEARS TO BE APPROXIMATELY SAME FOR ARCTIC GAS AND ALCAN PROJECTS.

L. BOARD VISUALIZES POSSIBLE COST OVERRUN OF 20-35 PERCENT IN ARCTIC GAS PROJECT AND 20-30 PERCENT FOR ALCAN PROJECT.

M. ALL APPLICANTS ESTIMATED RELATIVELY HIGH LEVELS OF CANADIAN CONTENT FOR THEIR PROPOSED PIPELINES -- IN THE RANGE OF 80-90 PERCENT -- WITH ALCAN SHOWING HIGHER OVER-ALL CANADIAN CONTENT THAN ARCTIC GAS.

N. BOARD BELIEVES THAT EFFECT OF ALL PROPOSED PIPELINE PROJECTS ON MACRO-ECONOMY OF CANADA WOULD BE UNIFORM AND NONE WOULD CAUSE SEVERE PROBLEMS.

O. COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS, WHICH EXCLUDED ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL COSTS THAT WOULD DIFFER BETWEEN ARCTIC AND ALCAN PROJECTS, INDICATES NET ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ARCTIC WOULD BE GREATER THAN FOR ALCAN.

P. ALTHOUGH BOARD IS NOT INVOLVED IN MERITS OF NATIVE LAND CLAIMS PER SE OR THEIR SETTLEMENT, IT IS CONCERNED WITH INTERRELATIONSHIP OF LAND CLAIMS SETTLEMENT WITH PIPELINE DECISION. PROBLEMS RELATING TO POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTION OF PIPELINE COMPOUND ALREADY CONFUSED NATIVE CLAIMS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT QUESTION. BECAUSE YUKON ECONOMY AND INSTITUTIONS ARE MORE DEVELOPED, YUKON LAND CLAIMS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT QUESTION. BECAUSE YUKON ECONOMY AND INSTITUTIONS ARE MORE DEVELOPED, YUKON LAND

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CLAIMS NEGOTIATIONS APPEAR TO BE MORE ADVANCED, SMALLER NUMBER OF YUKON NATIVE PEOPLES WOULD BE AFFECTED BY PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION AND YUKON NATIVES DONOT APPEAR TO BE PASSING THROUGH MAJOR RESTRUCTURING OF THEIR SOCIETY, AS MACKENZIE VALLEY NATIVES APPEAR TO BE, BOARD CONCLUDES THAT SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PIPELINE CORRIDORS WOULD, ON BALANCE, BE MORE FAVORABLE ALONG ALASKA HIGHWAY ROUTE THAN IN MACKENZIE VALLEY.

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Q. BOARD BELIEVES IDENTIFIABLE INDIRECT COSTS OF PIPELINE PROJECTS NORTH OF 60TH PARALLEL SHOULD BE BORNE BY PIPELINE COMPANY. THESE WOULD INCLUDE SUCH COSTS AS PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL MUNICIPAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO MEASURE WITH PRECISION. BOARD WOULD RECOMMEND TO GOVERNMENT THAT AGREEMENT BE ESTABLISHED WITH FIRM CONSTRUCTING LINE TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO DEFRAY SUCH COSTS IN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED 200 MILLION DOLLARS.

R. BOARD BELIEVES A GOVERNMENT AGENCY SHOULD BE CREATED TO MONITOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT AND WOULD RECOMMEND TO GOVERNMENT THAT IT ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE MACHINERY FOR THIS PURPOSE PRIOR TO FINAL DECISION IN PRINCIPAL BY GOVERNMENT REGARDING CONSTRUCTION OF PIPELINE.

S. EVIDENCE PRESENTED LEADS BOARD TO CONCLUDE THAT THE ARCTIC GAS PRIME ROUTE, BOTH NORTHERN YUKON COASTAL AND CROSS-DELTA SECTIONS WOULD BE ENVIRONMENTALLY UNACCEPTABLE AS WOULD THE INTERIOR ROUTE. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF EITHER COULD NOT BE MITIGATED OR AVOIDED.

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T. BOARD CONCLUDES THAT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH ALCAN ROUTE CAN BE MITIGATED OR AVOIDED.

U. ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION ON A DEMPSTER LINK IS SPARSE. CERTIFICATION OF LINK WOULD HAVE TO BE SUPPORTED BY DETAILED ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AS WOULD DIVERSION OF 48-INCH LINE THROUGH DAWSON. LATTER SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN IMMEDIATELY.

4. DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. FOOTHILLS PIPELINES LIMITED (MAPLE LEAF) PROJECT CANNOT

BE FINANCED; IT WOULD NOT OFFER LOWEST COST TRANSPORTATION OF DELTA GAS TO MARKET AND A PIPELINE SHOULD NOT BE BUILT ALONG MACKENZIE VALLEY AT THIS TIME. BOARD THEREFORE DENIES APPLICATION OF FOOTHILLS PIPELINES LIMITED.

B. ARCTIC GAS PROJECT IS BASED ON INCOMPATIBLE TIME CONSTRAINTS: URGENT NEED TO CONNECT ALASKAN GAS TO U.S. MARKETS AND NEED FOR MORE TIME TO RESOLVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONCERNS BEFORE A PIPELINE COULD BE BUILT IN MACKENZIE VALLEY.

C. PRIME ROUTE PROPOSED BY ARCTIC GAS FROM ALASKA-YUKON BORDER TO TUNUNUK JUNCTION, INCLUDING CROSS-DELTA SEGMENT, IS ENVIRONMENTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO BOARD AS IS ALTERNATIVE INTERIOR ROUTE.

D. FOR REASONS STATED IN B AND C, BOARD DENIES APPLICATION OF ARCTIC GAS.

E. ALCAN PROJECT GENERALLY OFFERS PREFERRED ROUTE FOR TRANSPORTING ALASKAN GAS TO MARKETS IN LOWER 48 STATES. HOWEVER, BOARD BELIEVES CERTAIN CHANGES TO PROJECT AS UNCLASSIFIED

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APPLIED FOR ARE DESIRABLE IN CANADIAN PUBLIC INTEREST.

F. BOARD IS PREPARED TO ISSUE CERTIFICATES OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY FOR VARIOUS PIPELINE SEGMENTS OF ALCAN PROJECT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS. BOARD IS RECOMMENDING TO GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL HOWEVER THAT APPROVAL BE WITHHELD UNTIL FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED:

1) APPROPRIATE AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN FILED WITH BOARD BY 26 AUGUST 1977, SEEKING CERTIFICATION OF SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES OF ALCAN FOR SEGMENTS OF PROJECT IN NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA, ALBERTA AND SOUTH-EASTERN BRITISH COLUMBIA. 51 PERCENT OF VOTING SHARES IN EACH OF SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES WOULD BE OWNED BY ALCAN AND 49 PERCENT IN EACH BY WEST COAST, ALBERTA GAS TRUNK LINE AND ANG (OR WEST COAST IF NOT ACCEPTABLE TO ANG), RESPECTIVELY.

2) THAT AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN ENTERED INTO BY ALCAN WITH GOVERNMENT OF CANADA WHEREBY ALCAN OR ANY SUCCESSOR WOULD UNDERTAKE THE FOLLOWING:

-- TO CONDUCT FEASIBILITY STUDIES REGARDING CONSTRUCTION OF GAS PIPELINE OR NO LESS THAN 30-INCH DIAMETER FROM MACKENZIE DELTA PARALLEL TO DEMPSTER HIGHWAY CONNECTING DELTA GAS TO ALCAN SYSTEM NEAR DAWSON CITY, YUKON, AND ON OR BEFORE 1 JULY, 1979 APPLY TO NEB FOR CERTIFICATE

TO CONSTRUCT SUCH A LINE;

-- TO AGREE TO PROVIDE CAPACITY IN MAIN 48-INCH DIAMETER
LINE FROM POINT OF CONNECTION OF DEMPSTER LATERAL TO
SUCH POINT OR POINTS ON 48-INCH DIAMETER SYSTEM IN CANADA
DEEMED NECESSARY TO EFFECT DELIVERY OF DELTA GAS TO
SOUTHERN CANADIAN MARKETS, SUCH CAPACITY TO BE PROVIDED
BY 1 JANUARY 1984 OR SUCH LATER DATE AS DEEMED NECESSARY
BY GOVERNMENT; AND
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-- TO PROVIDE PAYMENT UPON REQUEST OF GOC OF SUM OF MONEY
WHICH WOULD BE USED BY GOVERNMENT TO PAY FOR SOCIO-
ECONOMIC INDIRECT COSTS OF PIPELINE PROJECT NORTH OF 60TH
PARALLEL INCURRED DURING PERIOD EXPIRING TWO YEARS AFTER
LEAVE HAD BEEN GRANTED BY NEB TO OPEN PIPELINE. BOARD
RECOMMENDED THAT OBLIGATION BE LIMITED TO TWO HUNDRED
MILLION DOLLARS.

5. EMBASSY WILL POUCH COPY OF NEB FACT SHEET AND FULL
REPORT. ENDERS

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